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Title:

ALP Broadcast from Station 5KA presented by Don Dunstan, Member for Norwood

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A.L.P. BROADCAST FROM STATION 5KA 20/3/61

PRESENTED BY DON DUNSTAN - MEMBER FOR

NORWOOD

Good Evening,

Last week I promised you that starting from tonight I would bring you a series of conversations with people who would tell you in their own words of their problems. I am afraid that my abilities as a recording engineer were not equal to the occasion and the recording for this week's broadcast was not up to scratch so we will have to postpone the commencement of the new series of talks until next week, by which time I should think that I will be more proficient.

Tonight I want to talk to you about a situation which, particularly in the light of events of the past week, should be exercising the minds of us all.

We have seen how the Government of the Union of South Africa was condemned for its policy of apartheid. Under this policy the Bantu people who form the majority of the coloured people in the Union were denied access to many facilities available to Europeans, denied adequate education and relegated permanently to a second-class position in the community. I could go on for some time describing the repression policies of the S. African policies which make the statement of Dr. Verwoerd that apartheid is a policy of goodneighbourliness appear an exercise in the techniques of Dr. Goebbels - if you say the opposite of the truth often enough and loud enough you will begin to be believed.

But enough of S. Africa. The heartening thing is that the majority of Commonwealth Prime Ministers rightly took the stand that policies of this kind are incompatible with the principles on which the Commonwealth is founded. Mr. Menzies expresses concern for the fact that domestic policies of member nations should be scrutinised. Well he might. For should Australia's treatment of its aborigine peoples be questioned overseas we have much to answer for.

What is the position of these first Australians. The

Commonwealth Government has no power to legislate for them except in its territories. In the northern territory although the situation has improved in remains most unsatisfactory. There are many cases in outlying areas where aborigine people are used for work under conditions of severe exploitation. Within the States, each State can pass laws with regard to aborigines. Every State except tasmania has such laws - in Tasmania the aborigine people were shockingly massacred - so it has no aborigine problem.

Numbers of the State laws regarding aborigines place them under severe disabilities, in the guise of protecting them.

For instance, in South Australia, all people of aborigine descent, no matter how remote, it could be as little as 1/23rd part aborigine, ~~and~~ ^{are} subject to "protection" unless they obtain a special exemption certificate. It is like an identity card with a passport photo on it. While intermarriage with aborigines is not unlawful, it is unlawful for an exempt aborigine man or a European to associate with an unexempt aborigine woman.

Non exempt aborigines are subject to the directions of the protector, and all aborigine children are legally in the custody of the protector. If an ordinary citizen neglects his children that neglect must be proved in a Court if the child is to be removed from the custody of its parents - aborigine children can be removed without proving anything. No adequate work or training on a large scale has been provided for our aborigine or part aborigine population.

In relation to social service payments, non-exempt aborigines cannot get these directly. The Aborigines Department gets the payment and hands out what it thinks is appropriate to the needs of the person concerned. Although professedly wanting to train aborigine people to take their place as normal citizens in the general community the Government does not let many of them handle their own affairs.

Even worse situations exist in some other States. At Easter this year a Federal conference of aborigine advancement associations is due to examine the policies and practice of all Australia

Governments, and to endeavour to take action to improve the position of aborigines throughout Australia. There is already overseas interest in these matters. It is small wonder that Mr. Menzies is concerned. But people of goodwill and principle in Australia should be delighted; if overseas interest in Australia's policy on aborigines is needed to shame Australia into giving aborigines a fair deal - let's welcome that overseas interest.

Goodnight.